

## Reference Policy



**Mission Statement:** The Fontana Regional Library system (Library) provides the public of Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties with excellent service and convenient access to resources for their educational, informational, and recreational needs.

**Purpose Statement:** This purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance to those who deliver reference service at Fontana Regional Library.

**General Information:** Fontana Regional Library does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, age, disability, or genetic information, in the provision or administration of library services. The delivery of reference service requires the Library staff to be knowledgeable, approachable, sensitive, courteous, and efficient. Quality reference service depends upon effective interviewing, attentive listening, flexibility, and connecting customers with resources on hand or by referral to resources located elsewhere. The library staff understands that the basic function of reference services is to provide information, not opinion.

### REFERENCE SERVICE DEFINED

Reference service involves directly providing information or providing instruction in the use of resources to each patron as needed. All questions will be given equal consideration, and each will be answered as accurately and completely as possible within a reasonable time limit.

Reference services are provided through

1. Reference desk inquiries
2. Telephone inquiries
3. E-mail
4. Social media
5. Mail

### SERVICE GUIDELINES

1. Library cards are not required to receive reference services.
2. The needs of every library patron will always be taken seriously and treated with utmost respect and confidentiality. Discussion of any individual or group of individuals outside the professional context is strictly prohibited without the consent of the patron.
3. While on desk duty, service to the public takes precedence over any other duties, and service to the patron in the library takes precedence over telephone inquiries.
4. It is the responsibility of staff to anticipate public needs and offer service when it appears needed.
5. Information given is based on accurate print or non-print sources or learned from a reliable authority. The opinion, evaluation, or interpretation of staff, even when requested, is not given as fact.

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6. Neither the patron's nor the staff member's personal opinions and beliefs should influence the quality of service given.
7. Staff shall not offer their personal opinions on social issues, politics, religion, etc., to patrons.
8. Staff shall not give medical, legal, copyright, financial, or tax advice and shall never refer patrons to specific individual practitioners – physicians, attorneys, mental health professionals, or others. Referrals can be made to directories, agencies, and other appropriate community resources.
9. Library staff does not provide an appraisal of books, works of art, antiques, coins, stamps, currency, or other collectibles but will provide contact information for appraisal services derived from professional association directories.
10. If the information requested proves to be beyond the scope of the resources available, the patron, if possible, will be referred to other libraries or agencies that might be able to provide more help.
11. Staff will provide patrons with basic orientation to computer hardware and electronic products available on the Library's computers. When further information is needed staff will refer patrons to relevant materials, other library resources, and computer classes offered through the Library or in the community.
12. Charges may be incurred by patrons for photocopying or delivery services requested of the Library.